113, 13

Kamchadal RY3

/For data on the physical geography, geology, climate, flora, fauna and soil of Kamchatka, see 58: Berg, Rl Soviet Union, cat. 116, pp. 335-344. --Analyst/

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563 reſpects they are not diſtinguiſhable from the indigenes, but by their features and idiom.

161/361 With reſpect to the Kamtſchadale village, which forms a conſiderable part of the place, and is ſituated, as I have already ſaid, upon the narrow projection of land which cloſes in the entrance of the port, it is at preſent compoſed of from thirty to forty habitations, including winter and ſummer ones, called *iſbas* and *balagans*; and the number of inhabitants, taking in the garriſon, does not exceed a hundred, men, women and children. The intention is to increaſe them to upwards of four hundred.

13 To theſe details reſpecting the port of St. Peter and St. Paul, and its deſtined improvements, I ſhall add a few remarks upon the nature of the ſoil, the climate, and the rivers.

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13 rivers. The banks of the bay of Avatſcha are rendered difficult of acceſs by high mountains, of which ſome are covered with wood, and others have volcanos*. The valleys preſent a vegetation that aſtoniſhed me. The graſs was nearly of the height of a man; and the rural flowers, ſuch as the wild roſes and others that are interſperſed with them, diffuſe far and wide a moſt grateful ſmell.

The rains are in general heavy during ſpring and autumn, and blaſts of wind are frequent in autumn and winter. The latter is ſometimes rainy; but notwithſtanding its length, they aſſured me that its ſeverity is not very extreme, at leaſt in this

* There is a volcano about fifteen or twenty werſts from the port, which the naturaliſts who accompanied count de la Perouſe viſited, and which will be mentioned in his voyage. The inhabitants informed me that ſmoak often iſſued from it, but that an eruption, which uſed to be frequent, had not happened for many years.

ſouthern

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13 ſouthern part of Kamtſchatka*. The ſnow begins to appear on the ground in October, and the thaw does not take place till April or May; but even in July it is ſeen to fall upon the ſummit of high mountains, and particularly volcanos. The ſummer is tolerably fine; the ſtrongeſt heats ſcarcely laſt beyond the ſolſtice. Thunder is ſeldom heard, and is never productive of injury.

* The exceſſive cold of which the Engliſh complain, may not be without example; and I pretend not to contradict them. But as a proof that the rigour of the climate is not ſo very piercing, the inhabitants, whom they repreſent as not daring to come out of their ſubterraneous dwellings, or *yourts*, during the whole winter, for fear of being frozen, no longer conſtruct any of theſe caves in this ſouthern part of the peninſula, as I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve elſewhere. I acknowledge, however, that the cold which I experienced during my abode there, and which may be compared to that of the winter of 1779, appeared to me very ſimilar to what is felt at Saint Peterſburg. What the Engliſh muſt have had reaſon to ſuppoſe extraordinary, are the dreadful hurricanes, which bring on ſuch thick and heavy ſtorms of ſnow, that it is not poſſible either to venture out, or to advance, if we are on a journey. I experienced this more than once, as will be ſeen in the ſequel.

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13 Such is the temperature of almoſt all this part of the peninſula.

Two rivers pour their waters into the bay of Avatſcha; that from which the bay is named, and the Paratounka. They both abound with fiſh, and every ſpecies of water fowl, but theſe are ſo wild, that it is not poſſible to approach within fifty yards of them. The navigation of theſe rivers is impracticable after the 26 November, becauſe they are always frozen at this time; and in the depth of winter the bay itſelf is covered with ſheets of ice, which are kept there by the wind blowing from the ſea; but they are completely diſpelled as ſoon as it blows from the land. The port of St. Peter and St. Paul is commonly ſhut up by the ice in the month of January.

I ſhould doubtleſs ſay ſomething in this place of the manners and cuſtoms of the Kamt-